

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:  
gathering data during a transit of a package between a source location and a destination location, the data comprising;  
package data, comprising;  
a package identifier, and;  
a package location, and;  
delivery vehicle data associated with a delivery vehicle carrying the package, the vehicle data comprising;  
a vehicle identifier, and;  
a vehicle location;  
consolidating the gathered data to develop current package location information, and;  
providing access to the current package location information in a consolidated tracking display.
2. The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the vehicle location comprises a real-time location of the vehicle and the current package location information comprises the vehicle location.
3. The method in accordance with claim 2 wherein the real-time vehicle location is captured using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology.
4. The method in accordance with claim 1 wherein;  
gathering the package data comprises recording the package data in a package tracking database each time the package is handled during the transit, and wherein;  
gathering the vehicle data comprises recording the vehicle data in a vehicle tracking database each time the vehicle is accessed during the transit.

5. The method in accordance with claim 4 wherein consolidating the gathered data comprises updating the gathered vehicle location data with real-time vehicle location information.
6. The method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the real-time vehicle location information is captured using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology.
7. The method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the consolidated display comprises an indication to a user of which data derives from package handling.
8. The method in accordance with claim 4 wherein consolidating the gathered data comprises linking the package data to the vehicle data.
9. The method in accordance with claim 8 wherein the package data further comprises the vehicle identifier and wherein the linking comprises utilizing the vehicle identifier of the package data to access the vehicle tracking database and retrieve the vehicle data for the vehicle carrying the package.
10. The method in accordance with claim 9 wherein;  
consolidating the gathered data comprises updating the gathered vehicle location data with real-time vehicle location information, and wherein;  
the consolidated display comprises an indication to a user of which data derives from package handling.

11. The method in accordance with claim 4 wherein;  
recording the package data in a package tracking database comprises capturing the package identifier directly from the package using an automated data capture technology, and wherein;  
recording the vehicle data in a vehicle tracking database comprises capturing the vehicle identifier directly from the vehicle using an automated data capture technology.
12. The method in accordance with claim 11 wherein the automated data capture technology comprises at least one of bar code technology and radio frequency identification (RFID) tag technology.
13. A program product comprising:  
a computer readable medium and computer readable instructions embodied thereon and effective when executing on a computer system to;  
gather data during a transit of a package between a source location and a destination location, the data comprising;  
package data, comprising;  
a package identifier, and;  
a package location, and;  
delivery vehicle data associated with a delivery vehicle carrying the package, the vehicle data comprising;  
a vehicle identifier, and;  
a vehicle location;  
consolidate the gathered data to develop current package location information, and;  
provide access to the current package location information in a consolidated tracking display.

14. The program product in accordance with claim 13 wherein the vehicle location comprises a real-time location of the vehicle and the current package location information comprises the vehicle location.

15. The program product in accordance with claim 14 wherein the real-time vehicle location is captured using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology.

16. The program product in accordance with claim 13 wherein;  
the instructions for gathering the package data comprise instructions effective when executing to record the package data in a package tracking database each time the package is handled during the transit, and wherein;

the instructions for gathering the vehicle data comprise instructions effective when executing to record the vehicle data in a vehicle tracking database each time the vehicle is accessed during the transit.

17. The program product in accordance with claim 16 wherein;  
the instructions for recording the package data comprise instructions effective when executing to capture the package identifier directly from the package using an automated data capture technology, and wherein;

the instructions for recording the vehicle data comprise instructions effective when executing to capture the vehicle identifier directly from the vehicle using an automated data capture technology.

18. The program product in accordance with claim 17 wherein the automated data capture technology comprises at least one of bar code technology and radio frequency id (RFID) tag technology.

19. The program product in accordance with claim 13 wherein;  
the instructions for consolidating the gathered data comprise instructions effective when executing to update the gathered vehicle location data with real-time vehicle location information using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology, and wherein;

the instructions for providing the consolidated tracking display comprise instructions effective when executing to indicate to a user which data derives from package handling.

20. The program product in accordance with claim 16 wherein;  
the package data further comprises the vehicle identifier, and wherein;  
the instructions for consolidating the gathered data comprise instructions effective when executing to utilize the vehicle identifier of the package data to access the vehicle tracking database and retrieve the vehicle data for the vehicle carrying the package.

21. The program product in accordance with claim 20 wherein;  
the instructions for consolidating the gathered data further comprise instructions effective when executing to update the gathered vehicle location data with real-time vehicle location information using global positioning satellite (GPS) technology, and wherein;

the instructions for providing the consolidated tracking display comprise instructions effective when executing to indicate to a user which data derives from package handling.

22. An apparatus comprising:
- a computer system;
  - at least one data capture device;
  - a package tracking database established and maintained on said computer system for storing package information, including a package identifier, captured by said at least one data capture device each time a package is handled during a transit between a source location and a destination location;
  - a vehicle tracking database established and maintained on said computer system for storing vehicle information, including a vehicle identifier, captured by said at least one data capture device each time a vehicle is accessed during the transit;
  - a real-time vehicle location system for identifying a real-time location of the vehicle;
  - a display for displaying information to a user;
  - means for consolidating the package information, the vehicle information and the real-time location of the vehicle into consolidated package location information; and
  - means for providing the consolidated package location information to the display in response to a user request.
23. The apparatus in accordance with claim 22 wherein the package information further comprises the vehicle identifier for the vehicle carrying the package.
24. The apparatus in accordance with claim 23 wherein the means for consolidating utilizes the vehicle identifier of the package information to access the vehicle tracking database and retrieve the vehicle information for the vehicle carrying the package.
25. The apparatus in accordance with claim 22 wherein the real-time vehicle location system comprises a GPS system.

26. The apparatus in accordance with claim 22 wherein each at least one data capture device comprises automated data capture technology for capturing at least the package identifier directly from the package and at least the vehicle identifier directly from the vehicle.
27. The apparatus in accordance with claim 26 wherein the automated data capture technology comprises at least one of bar code technology and RFID tag technology.
28. The apparatus in accordance with claim 22 wherein the consolidated location information further comprises an indication to the user of which information derives from package handling.
29. A method comprising:  
for each time a delivery vehicle has at least one package loaded or unloaded, capturing;  
a vehicle identifier of the delivery vehicle;  
a package identifier of each package being loaded or unloaded;  
a location identifier of the loading or unloading site;  
creating and storing a data record for each captured package identifier associating each said package identifier with the vehicle identifier and the location identifier;  
tracking the real-time location of the delivery vehicle, and;  
in response to a user request, displaying a package location report for a package in transit comprising a list of loading and unloading locations and a real-time location of the delivery vehicle carrying the package.

30. The method in accordance with claim 29 wherein the step of capturing comprises utilizing an automated data capture technology wherein said automated data capture technology comprises at least one of bar code technology and radio frequency id (RFID) tag technology.

31. The method in accordance with claim 29 wherein capturing the location identifier and tracking the real-time location of the delivery vehicle comprise utilizing GPS technology.

32. An object tracking apparatus comprising:

data capture means for capturing an object identifier directly from a first object and from a plurality of second objects;

location recognition means for recognizing a location of the object tracking apparatus;

data organization means for associating the location of the apparatus and the first object identifier with each of the plurality of second object identifiers as the object identifiers are captured.

33. The object tracking apparatus in accordance with claim 32 wherein the data capture means comprises a bar code scanner and the first object identifier and the second object identifiers are provided on bar codes located on the respective objects.

34. The object tracking apparatus in accordance with claim 32 wherein the data capture means comprises a radio frequency receiver and the first object identifier and the second object identifiers are transmitted from RFID tags located on the first object and the second objects, respectively,

35. The object tracking apparatus in accordance with claim 32 wherein the first object is a delivery vehicle and the second objects are packages being loaded onto, or unloaded from, said vehicle.



36. The object tracking apparatus in accordance with claim 35 further comprising a location tracker for tracking a real-time location of the vehicle during transit and wherein the data organization means further associates the real-time location of the vehicle with each of the package identifiers of the packages on the vehicle.